



## Steps to Take to Guard Against Food Terrorism

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In this new era, where terrorism can extend to domestic levels in the USA, the possibility that terrorists can seek to harm others by tampering with food supplies is an unfortunate reality. To combat such terrorism, one must anticipate weak points in a food chain and plan to strengthen and protect them. Recently, Dr. Doug Archer, a food safety and security expert from the University of Florida, and Fred H. Degnan, of Catholic University School of Law, prepared some points that food growers, packers, shippers, and processors need to consider in these times.

- Security of facilities and personnel is of utmost priority. Do background checks where possible, and define and limit access to finished products to authorized personnel only.
- Know the personnel delivering raw materials and packaging or transporting finished products. Know the security precautions they are taking.
- If you have anti-tampering plans, reevaluate them to ensure effectiveness. If you don't have such plans, develop them.
- If you have plans for GMP (Good Manufacturing Practice), GAP (Good Agricultural Practice), or HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point), reevaluate them to ensure the integrity of raw materials, packaging, storage, and distribution. If you don't have such plans, develop them.
- If you have recall or traceback procedures, reevaluate them to include the consumer complaint process with the goal of retrieving products of concern within 24 hours of problem determination. Identify who has authorized access to product analyses during emergencies. If you don't have these procedures, develop them.
- Train your employees to improve emergency preparedness. Practice drills regularly.
- Know the procedural changes that would happen in the event of an attack.

It is important to avoid complacency, even when daily living seems to have returned to normal, and to accept that false alarms will be the price of vigilance.